The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian.

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Notes of the Month.

UNDER the above heading last month we drew the attention of our readers to the meetings arranged for the inauguration of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland. These, we stated, were to be held during the month of January. Such was indeed the original proposal; but as many of our friends felt that much time and energy would then be devoted to political affairs, and this fact might militate against the successful carrying out of the plan, it was decided to postpone the meetings until February. As we announced that all details would be duly communicated to the congregations, and this has not hitherto been done, the postponement of the date will have occasioned no surprise, but nevertheless the above explanation of the delay seemed necessary.

We are now in the position to give the full particulars as to the date and character of the meetings. Thursday, February 24th, has been fixed upon in the hope that an early notice will ensure what we all desire—large and representative attendances. The occasion is of such solemn importance in itself, and will mark such an important step in our history as a religious community, that it is fitting to commence with a united service, followed by celebration of the Lord's Supper, in the First Church, Rosemary St. That will be at twelve o'clock on the date mentioned. No one in our Church is more fitted by long and faithful labour and other qualifications to conduct that service than the Rev. Wm. Napier, of Clough. His consent to undertake the duty is in keeping with his readiness at all times to serve our common cause. We sincerely hope that all the congregations concerned will be well represented on February 24th, and make the service not only memorable in itself but also enable it to be what it is intended to be—a united act of consecration to a great and sacred duty for God and for man. In the evening of the same day it is proposed to have a united gathering, at which will be emphasised other aspects of our Church life and aim. Every effort will be made to give to this that social and stimulating atmosphere in which alone our best work can be done. We depend upon our readers to do their part in this important matter.

An agreeable echo of the visit of our English friends to the North of Ireland in October last greeted us at Christmas-time. This was truly a musical echo, for it took the form of a new hymn-tune composed by Mr. John Harrison, President of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. Not the least pleasing feature of it is that it received the name of "Belfast" from its talented composer, which we are justified in regarding as due to the great pleasure occasioned by the very successful visit and by the harmony which characterised the various gatherings. We appreciate, therefore, the graceful manner in which our visitor says, "Thank you," and accept his compliment with gratitude.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

By Rev. G. Leonard Phelps.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant."—*I Cor. xii.* 1.

THE Corinthians were ignorant concerning spiritual gifts; they were apt to imagine that only such strange and inexplicable phenomena as speaking with tongues could be regarded as manifestations of the Spirit, they looked for the Divine only in the exceptional and mysterious. St. Paul, on the other hand, dares to bring even the most sacred things to the bar of reason; he knows that spiritual life, no less than physical life, is under law, and although he is free to confess that the law is not always known to man he believes absolutely that knowledge is better than ignorance, that the truth *does* make men free. He boldly attempts to give a rationale of religious experience; although he is the apostle of justification by faith, his faith is never a barrier against advancing knowledge, never a cloak for superstition.

The very old conception of spiritual gifts which made a distinct cleavage between the Creator and his creation, the former being regarded as spiritual and good, the latter material and bad, still remains in the back of many people's minds and produces fruit very like that found among the Corinthians. Whenever our contact with Divinity is narrowed down to the seemingly miraculous and supernatural the greater part of human conduct and knowledge is uninfluenced by religion. All history shows that though this supernaturalism may produce spasmodic efforts at moral regeneration these efforts are neither wisely directed nor long sustained while the more usual result is a state of superstitious fear and moral instability which justifies the strong language of Jesus—"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it."

The Holy Spirit is still a living force in the lives of men; we must learn to trace its working first and foremost in ourselves, not only in the remote past, not only in the exceptional and the strange, but also in the struggling aims and fitful hopes of our every-day. This is the practical bearing of Jesus' teaching of the Fatherhood of God, this is the outcome of St. Paul's doctrine concerning spiritual gifts. Human nature unaided never could attain unto even the desire for the morally good and the scientifically true, but then human nature never is unaided, we are spiritual children of the Divine Father, we have access, not as an occasional favour but as a natural birthright to spiritual gifts; we share in the larger life of the universe, and consequently revelation is not a miracle contrary to law but the constant relation between the indwelling God and the spirit of man, and in the story of human progress in all departments of life we see the unfolding of divine purposes. It is only because we have access by one spirit to the Father that we are able to recognise and revere those whose lives and teachings most clearly set forth the divinest ideals and truths. We do not account it a miracle that we feel stirrings of the blood on witnessing or reading of heroic deeds, we do not think of special divine intervention when prompted by our best impulses we strive to follow knowledge like a sinking star beyond the bound of human thought, or follow right in scorn

of consequence, and yet we do these things simply and solely because we are recipients of spiritual gifts. The spirit that makes us responsive to the songs of the poets, the hymns of psalmists, the wisdom of sages, the insight of prophets and the supremely holy life and teaching of Jesus is one with that which gives us appreciation of beauty, truth and virtue in all the common round of life. "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." No man can say, I value justice more than wealth, goodness more than comfort, truth more than fame, save in the Holy Spirit. The visions of saints, the ecstasies of mystics, the profound intuitions of great teachers and all that stands out arrestingly in the world's religious history, culminating with the unsurpassed glory revealed in the Master, differ not in kind but in degree from these every-day experiences. When once we have grasped this fact, when we take to heart the glad tidings that spiritual gifts do not drop like manna from heaven but come in obedience to definite laws which require our co-operation, just as the bread for which we pray, yet to get which we have to do our part, then the whole of life is lifted up into the spiritual sphere and nothing is common, nothing secular. There are diversities of gifts but the same spirit; the scientist, the artist, the social reformer, aye, and the man whose lowly lot seems to afford no opportunity for great things, no less than the theologian and the moralist, is the recipient of spiritual gifts. St. Paul was no more certainly "called to be an apostle" than you and I are called to be what we are, however far removed our occupations may seem to be from the life of the spirit. Be it minding a farm or casting up accounts, our work cannot be outside the realm of divine service.

Seek not afar for beauty. Lo! it glows
In dew-wet grasses all about our feet;
In birds, in sunshine, childish faces sweet,
In stars, and mountain summits topped with snows.

Go not abroad for happiness. For, see
It is a flower that blossoms by thy door.
Bring love and justice home; and then, no more,
Thou'lt wonder in what dwelling joy may be.

Dream not of noble service elsewhere wrought.
The simple duty that awaits thy hand
Is God's voice uttering a divine command;
Life's common deeds build all that saints have thought.

In wonder-workings, or some bush aflame,
Men look for God, and fancy Him concealed,
But in earth's common things He stands revealed,
While grass and flowers and stars spell out His Name.

The paradise men seek—the city bright
That gleams beyond the stars for longing eyes,
Is only human goodness in the skies.
Earth's deeds, well done, glow into heavenly light.

A CHARGE

To the Congregation in Newry recently delivered

By REV. A. DAVISON (Dromore).

I have been entrusted by the Presbytery with the task of giving the charge to the Congregation. In performing this duty, it would be presumptuous to assume that you do not know what your duties are. The very fact of your existence as a Congregation pre-supposes that you share certain privileges and responsibilities. Still, to-day, you make a fresh start, which supplies the opportunity for re-emphasising and re-considering your respective obligations, as minister and people.

Now, it is generally believed that, in an Ordination Service, the ministers present do all that is required and that the people are there just to see what is done, as though it were a mere spectacle. That seems to me an entirely wrong attitude to take up. In the act of Ordination all the people present co-operate to give practical expression to the feeling that we believe our brother to be the one who is fitted to minister in holy things. It is an act of the whole body—and not of the ministers only. The ministers only do for all what it is impossible for all to do, decently and in order. When your minister stands in this pulpit it will be to reveal what God has revealed to him. All that comes to you, through him, will be coloured by the condition of his own heart and mind, just as truly as the light that passes through a stained glass window takes the hue of the glass through which it breaks. Truth comes from the lips of the preacher only as the imagination of the heart clothes it. You will, therefore, if you wish to get the best out of the services of your minister—if you wish to see manifestations of God's power in this place—you will try to free him, as far as you possibly

can, from all unnecessary mental agitations, and surround him with an appropriate spiritual atmosphere in which to do his work. For instance, you will recognise that it is a thing of prime importance to be in your places Sunday by Sunday for divine worship. A church that is sparsely attended by those who claim to be its professed adherents cannot fail to have a depressing effect on the mind of the preacher ; for a sermon, a genuine sermon, is the creation, not of the preacher alone, but of the preacher plus the congregation. Something must come to him from them. If he feels that the sympathies of his people are absent—and they can scarcely be said to be present when for sundry superficial reasons they are irregular in their attendance at service—his task is indeed a difficult and depressing one.

I was reading somewhere the other day that one of the reasons for the general decline in church attendance is, that people have come to be so familiar with the offices and privileges of religion as to conceive a contempt for them, thus once more proving the old proverb true—"familiarity breeds contempt." And, I want to ask to-day, is that a true explanation in the case of our own churches ? Is our contempt—if I may be permitted to use that term—a contempt that is born of familiarity ? No ; I think not. The source of the trouble with us, I fear, is to be found in our freer position. The larger liberty of which we boast in contrast with other religious communions is too often interpreted to mean the liberty, not to do as we ought, which is the true meaning of liberty, but to do as we please. Those stricter ideas with respect to Sabbath observance that prevailed among our fathers a generation or less ago have given place, in this generation, to a liberty which, in too many cases, means no worship at all. It would seem, therefore, that there is no danger of our becoming too familiar with worship. Nay, familiarity is one of the things that we need more and more to cultivate, and, I venture to say, one of the things that all Protestant communions need to cultivate. We have yet to learn the secret of the joy that comes from worship. You remember the incident of Jesus' visit to His own city of Nazareth. He went to His own city of Nazareth, and His own people were offended in Him. " Is not this the carpenter's son ?" they say. " Is not His mother called Mary ?" And His brethren James, and Joses, and Simon and Judas ? and His sisters are they not with us ?" These Nazarenes thought that they knew Jesus : they thought they knew all the possibilities in Him. In a way, of course, they were familiar with Him, and their familiarity proved the proverb true. But they knew Him, after all, only very superficially. There were depths in Him their small wisdom had never sounded. And so, in a way, we are familiar with the churches —we know what they stand for, or we think we do—but we do not know them enough. If the privileges of religion seem of small account to us, it is not, I think, that we have reached a level at which we can criticise or despise. We make light of them because we do not know. It is because man does not realise what music, and art, and books can be to him that he regards them as trivial and common. They are a perpetual interest to the man who is in the secret. I have dwelt much on this matter of cultivating regularity in church attendance because I feel it implies so much. It means so much to you, and means so much to your minister. If we would preserve alive our sense of wonder—of worship—we must needs cultivate it. By our neglect we may destroy the powers of religion, for, remember, these powers are not given as a hard and fast quantity that remains constant.

There is only one other matter that I need speak about. You will expect your minister to visit you in your homes, and if he be a true minister to you he will not neglect this side of his work. He will pay due regard to it. But if you are wise you will not be too exacting in this respect. You will give him time for the weightier matters of sermon composition. There is a notion prevalent among large numbers of people that a sermon can be rushed off in a couple of hours on a Saturday evening ; but sermons do not drop down from heaven on to the study table. They require thought, prayer and meditation. Determine the measure of your pastor's love for you, not so much by the number of social calls he makes in the year, as by the endeavours he makes from Sunday to Sunday to help you in your daily life, and lead you nearer God. If he helps you there he does more for you than many social calls of which you may be the recipients. I know there are some who do not understand this position. Just as there are children who make the lamentable mistake of judging the measure of love their parents have for them, not by the year long service rendered them and the provision of clothes and food and educational privileges, but by the presents received a Christmas, and if the presents are not just what they desired lose their patience and declare that their parents do not care for them. Measure your pastor's love by the amount of holiness he establishes in your hearts. If he is true, of course he will serve you socially ; but he will serve you best if he serves you morally and religiously. Let a real consideration for your minister's welfare manifest itself in all your dealings with him ; and it will re-act upon you in tender solicitude for your welfare. Be true to your minister, and to one another. Make this church a spiritual house—this building a place of sacred sweetness, and exalted thoughts and feelings, and this ministry a power for good to the whole neighbourhood. You can do it, if you will. People talk of large and small churches. Where the spirit of the Lord is there are no small churches. Remember God

is with you ; He knows you, loves you, waits to bless you with every good and grace. Try to reciprocate that love, and He will work wonders in your midst.

SUNDAY MORNING SOLILOQUIES OF HEZEKIAH GOODENOUGH.

Recorded by REV. W. S. SMITH.

WAS JESUS GOD ?

I WAS wondering again and again last week, whether there was any real ground for thinking of Jesus Christ as God. All is fairly quiet now, as the Lord's Day should be, and such a subject is an appropriate one to talk to oneself about for a little time, especially when others are at meeting and I am not. My thoughts wander dreadfully, but I blame theology for this. It would make a saint wander, even if he were in the Garden of Eden. I wonder why theology, which concerns man's everlasting welfare, can only be understood by a Doctor of Divinity. If none but those who understand it as it is laid down by learned men, will get to heaven, I fear that place will have a somewhat deserted appearance.

I find this question of Christ's godhead a very curious one, if I try to look at it on theological lines, but when I look at it in a plain way, as a plain man should look at it, it is as plain as the nose on one's face. If Jesus Christ were God, then surely he could not be man ; and if he were man, then surely he could not be God. Now, which was he ? God, say most of the big theologians ; man, says Jesus himself. Which are we to believe ? I shall try and follow Jesus because he was not a professor of systematic theology, who had signed a confession of faith drawn up by Moses and said he accepted it as containing his belief, and therefore could teach nothing opposed to it, even if requested to do so by an archangel. But God could not surely be born of one of his own frail, perishing creatures ; could not be nourished as a man, and grow in wisdom and stature as a man. This, to me, is as plain as that two and two make four.

Why do men desire to believe that Jesus Christ was God ? Are they led to do this by reason, or by theological necessity ? Let me see if I can make it clear to myself.

All men, it is said, through the Fall, sinned in Adam, and thereby lay under the eternal wrath and condemnation of the Almighty, which could only be removed by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This sin, it is further alleged, was committed against an infinite being, and therefore, before the sin could be atoned for, it was necessary that the sacrifice should be sinless and infinite in its nature. Hence to meet these requirements Jesus was theologically converted into Deity. But was Jesus sinless in the sense of not being tainted with the original corruption in Adam ? The creeds say, yes ; that he existed from all eternity (Deity must be eternal), and with a view to rendering an infinite atonement for the sin of mankind, he descended from heaven, and by the agency of the Holy Ghost took upon himself human nature, was born of the Virgin Mary, and thus became fitted for the office he was to fulfil. Thus the Second Person of the Trinity, notwithstanding that he pre-existed, had for his progenitor, the Third Person of the Trinity. That which had been, needed to be again ! What a marvellous arrangement ! What a curious instance of theological legerdemain ! But, even supposing that Jesus Christ had the Holy Ghost for his father—though surely he needed no such father, if by his own power he were able to create all things—did he not partake of the nature of his mother ? There's the rub. St. Paul says that he did (Gal. iv. 4). I know that I partook of the nature of my mother, and I know that that is the case with other people. If all human beings are tainted with original sin, then was not the Virgin Mary also tainted ? And if she inherited the theological virus, then must not Jesus Christ also have inherited it from her ? It is impossible, according to the nature of things, that it could have been otherwise. (This straining is making my head a bit dizzy, I fear.) But I am not inclined to believe that Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost any more than are human beings generally. Jesus was the reputed son of Joseph, the carpenter, and Joseph believed himself, judging by his conduct, to be really so ; and Mary said he was, for did she not on one occasion, in the presence of Joseph and Jesus and the great doctors in the temple, declare that " thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing " (Luke ii. 48). All who knew Jesus intimately, spoke of him as the son of Joseph ; while Christ himself and his apostles never said a word to the contrary. And is not his pedigree given to show that he sprang from " The seed of David *according to the flesh* ?" The endeavour to prove Christ's freedom from the taint of original sin will not bear inspection, and therefore the question of his Deity must be dismissed as not proved, so far as this question is concerned.

Unfortunately, the theologians will not dismiss it ; and so confusion will have to continue. What can be said as to his purely human nature, his flesh and blood, his appetites and passions ? If he were God, he certainly (though Hezzy declares that impossible) was man too. He ate, drank, wearied, slept, suffered as a man, yet died, it is said, as both man and God ! Good heavens ! Where are we ? Systematic theology required such a consummation, and so the nature of Jesus had to be changed to suit the " inventions " of men. This looks like juggling—theological juggling—but it won't do for a plain man like me. It might do for a philosopher, who can

see things that other folk can't, but it won't do for me. It's a theory that can't be seen through. I haven't patience with it. When Jesus spoke of his earthly wants, hopes, sympathies ; when he said he didn't know certain things, then it is said he spoke as a man ; but when he spoke of matters affecting the Deity or salvation, then he spoke as God. In other words, Christ knew, as God, what he did not know as man ; and he felt as man what he did not and could not as God. Most accommodating doctrine ; I have read of nothing in heathen religions more strange and accommodating.

When I steadfastly contemplate the man Christ Jesus in the light of the creeds, a mist gathers about him through which he has assumed a double nature, having the qualities of man and God. But when I steadfastly contemplate him in the light of the New Testament, I behold Jesus as the man approved of God, whose wisdom, tenderness and symapthy fire my soul with admiration, and exalt it. I can realise him in his human nature, touched and sanctified by the spirit of God ; but I fail to realise his Godhead. This is also the case when I think of the words of Jesus ; and so I cannot help mourning the fact that some persons have deprived us through the creeds of the real human Jesus, and set up an unreal, theological one in his place. They have taken away our human, sympathising Lord, and I know not where they have laid him, and they have left us a being of very questionable and contradictory attributes in his stead. In this matter, they have striven to show that reason is unreason, that Christ's own words must not be understood as he evidently intended them to be, that, when he said he was a man, he did not mean to say so ; that when he disclaimed the divine attribute of goodness, he made a mistake ; and that when he denied the possession of foreknowledge concerning a certain day and hour, he really did not mean what he said. It seems all so queer and unreal. I think it is very unfair for learned men to introduce into this subject such confusion that poor folk like me have difficulty in finding our way through it. And, then, look at the penalties attached to unbelief in these impossible things ! But I don't think I shall let the creeds, even though one of them threatens me with perishing everlastingly, frighten me.

We may rest assured that whatever the wise men of Westminster in their *Confession of Faith*, and other creed-makers, said about Jesus being God, there is something very different and very much better, in the New Testament. There, Jesus speaks of himself as the son of God ; that God is his God and Father ; that whatever power he possessed was from God ; that he was inferior to God ; that he prayed to God, and said He was the proper object of worship ; that he was taught of God ; that he was the sent of God (but never said he was God) ; and that he did the will of God. We read that he had father, mother, brothers and sisters like other human beings ; that he hungered and thirsted as a man ; was a servant of God ; that he denied being equal with God, and said no one had seen God. Many times in Scripture Jesus is spoken of as man, and as son of God, over a hundred times. And, further, there is nothing in the New Testament about Jesus being a God-man, God the son, or of his two-fold nature. How these systematic theologians make one's head ache.

It is all as plain as a pikestaff. Scripture is dead against this marvellous, far-fetched doctrine of the Deity of Jesus Christ. Reason is against it. Common sense scouts it as an attempt to deprive the Almighty of power, glory and honour. But many of the doctors of divinity, who, too often, are theological conjurers, are for it, and hurl their anathemas at me. Who would be a doctor of divinity ?

But I hear our folk from meeting. Nothing strange, I suppose ? What was the text ? "*For false Christs, and false prophets shall arise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed : behold, I have foretold you all things.*" (Mark xiii. 22-23.)

Every Day.

*

There's a prayer that should be said,
And a Book that should be read
Every Day.
There's a work that should be wrought,
And a battle to be fought
Every Day.

There are duties to be done,
And victories to be won,
As soars and sets the sun
Every Day.
There's a Cross that must be borne,
And a thorny chaplet worn
Every Day.

And God's dawn shall follow night,
And darkness yield to light
Every Day.
If in patience we are strong,
We shall not suffer long,
But shall beat down fraud and wrong
Every Day.

There's a Prayer that should be read,
"Give us our daily bread,"
Every Day.
While we grapple with our sin,
O, Christ, Thy work begin
Every Day.

And when the race is run,
And the battle has been won,
We shall rest—our life's work done—
Every Day.

THE TRUE MEANING OF "NON-SUBSCRIBING."

(Concluded.)

By Rev. W. E. Mellone.

It ought not to be difficult for anyone to see the reasons for denying the right of a majority to enforce subscription. They may be stated, in brief, categorically :—

1. Declarations and Confessions of Faith do not accomplish the object aimed at ; they do not secure uniformity of belief or opinion. You may, so to speak, tie a man's tongue, or pen, but you cannot coerce his thoughts ; you may compel him to conceal or dissemble them.

2. It is quite inconsistent with, and opposed to the great principle of Protestantism—the Right of Private Judgment.

3. It is against liberty of conscience and the duty of free enquiry after truth, and thus would stop the way to all, or any, progress.

4. It protects the worst abuses and evils of priestcraft, churchcraft and sectarianism.

5. It rests on the authority of numbers and on the arrogancy of ambitious ecclesiastical oligarchs.

6. It deals dishonestly with Holy Scripture, asking, not what does the Bible really teach, but what is the orthodox interpretation—what supports our opinions or our church.

But the fact should, especially in these days, be brought out and emphasised that Non-Subscription is equally opposed to the dogmatism, narrowness and conceited assurance sometimes found on the side of unbelief. There is such a thing as *disbelieving* on authority.

The present writer can only claim to have been a quiet observer of facts during a long ministry, now in its fiftieth year, and also a diligent reader of Church history, and he sets it down as his deliberate conclusion that the Non-Subscribers were not only a noble body of men, but they were in the right, and that their principles are as true and needful to-day as ever. They were opposed to subscription *per se*, that is, as a thing wrong in itself. "The Bible and the Bible alone" was the standard of their religion and their belief ; but they demanded and exercised the "right of private judgment" in the interpretation and use of it. The majority, who voted for subscription, were even more ready to appeal to the Scriptures ; but virtually and practically they required that the Bible should be referred to and understood in accordance with their doctrinal standard—the "Westminster Confession."

And did their arbitrary decision safeguard what they held to be the right belief ? Did they succeed in eliminating what they considered the dangerous heresy of Unitarian Christianity ? They could expel honoured and beloved brethren by making it impossible for them, with any consistency, or self-respect, to remain ; but they could not expel the leaven of "Free Enquiry," nor its results. This is shown by the fact that a century afterwards, in a still more famous synod held at Strabane, the same contrary "winds of doctrine," which had been blowing all through the hundred years, rose to a great storm. "There were giants in those days"—men such as Dr. Montgomery on the one side, and Dr. Cooke on the other. It was known that Unitarianism in the form of Arianism was growing and spreading among ministers and congregations. Dr. Cooke and his powerful party saw that something had to be done to put a stop to it. The most effectual way, they thought, was to require from ministers and elders a declaration of assent and consent to a Trinitarian creed. This was one of the most famous and momentous Synods ever held in Presbyterian Ulster. The crowded attendance of ministers and laity from all the province, especially from the country nearer to the place of meeting ; the protracted sessions continued from morning to evening on three successive days ; the long and powerful orations of Drs. Cooke and Montgomery ; the importance of the main question to be decided ; the excited interest felt in it not only in the Assembly but all through the province ; all tended to make the occasion memorable and historic.

The principal point in dispute was again not the truth or error of particular doctrines, but should ministers and elders in future be required to subscribe to the conventional confession of faith, *i.e.*, the Westminster Confession ; and should ministers be obliged to preach the gospel according to that standard. We all know what the result was. Our honoured "fathers and brethren" at the time stood firm for the "Liberty wherewith Christ makes us free ;" and we have inherited the results of their courage and consistent adherence to principle. God grant that we may show ourselves worthy of our heritage. The blessing of freedom depends not merely, or chiefly, upon its possession as a right, but upon its realised results.

REPORTS.

Ballymoney.—An interesting function took place at the Manse, Ballymoney, on Tuesday night, 28th December, when the members of the congregation assembled for the purpose of offering to Miss Matts, daughter of Rev. D. Matts (minister of the church) a substantial token of appreciation of her services to the choir and the Sunday-school, and a testimony to the esteem in which she is held. The testimonial took the form of a purse of gold, which was accompanied by an address, signed on

behalf of the members of the congregation by Mr. J. T. Burnside and Mr. Robert M'Kay, and read by Mr. John Wallace Pinkerton. The address set forth that the members of Miss Matts' father's congregation desired to take this opportunity of expressing their appreciation of her zealous and untiring work in connection with the choir and Sunday-school. The address bore testimony to her genial nature, warm sympathy and her readiness to help in all things connected with the church, qualities which had endeared her to the congregation, and it also referred to the unanimity with which the movement for the testimonial had been taken up. The three-year old little son of Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Burnside, of Secon, then handed over the purse, amid applause. In reply, Miss Matts said she felt some difficulty in expressing in words her sense of this further great act of kindness. She valued their gift, but she valued still more highly the feeling of goodwill and affection which had prompted it, and she reciprocated all the kindly expressions contained in the address. She was pleased that the relations between the congregation on the one hand, and her father, mother and herself on the other hand, had always been of so friendly a character, and hoped to have the joy of seeing that friendly feeling maintained. Rev. D. Matts added a few words of thanks, and expressed his great gratification that after forty-two years of his ministry among them they should assemble that night in that friendly feeling which had always existed between them to offer this pleasing testimony of their regard for his daughter. He mentioned that the choir was started on December 27th, 1868, and from that time to the present they had supplied the music for the church. He recognised the new spirit and the new energy which had sprung up among them, and remarked that it was a source of satisfaction to him that, though no longer able to personally supervise the musical work, his daughter was able to carry on the duties. He trusted that the pleasant relations which had hitherto existed between them would always continue.

Belfast: First Congregation.—The Annual Tea and Entertainment in connection with the Sunday School were held in the Central Hall, on Wednesday evening, January 19th. There was a crowded attendance. The proceedings opened with hymn and prayer, followed by an address given by the Chairman (Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D.) The latter spoke of the work of the Sunday School as one of co-operation, first, with the religious training received by the scholars in their homes; second, with the religious activities of the church to which the school was attached. If the first failed in its effects through neglect or indifference the task of the teacher was greatly increased; while failure to connect closely and intimately the labours of school and church told adversely on both. Hence their aim in the Sunday School was to serve as a vital link in the promotion of the best moral and spiritual life. Later, the prizes won during the past year were distributed by Mrs. Rossington. An excellent programme followed, consisting of songs by Messrs. Laird and M'Lean and a song by Miss Marjorie Hill. But perhaps most interest was manifested in the scholars' play, "The Toyshop," which had been skilfully adapted by Miss F. Davidson for this performance. No less than fifteen scholars took part in the play, and the fact that the latter passed off splendidly and without the least hitch is a testimony to the very careful training received from Miss Davidson and Mrs. Rossington. A hymn and benediction concluded a most successful evening.

Belfast: Stanhope Street Mission.—The Annual Congregational Soiree took place on Wednesday, December 29th, upwards of one hundred and fifty members and friends of the Mission sat down to a nicely-served tea at seven o'clock in the Schoolroom. After tea, the party adjourned to the church, when the chair was taken by Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., Chairman of Mission Committee, who, in his usual cordial happy

manner, referred to the usefulness of the Domestic Mission in its varied activities, and outlined the possibility of its becoming a greater factor for good in the common life of the city than even its splendid past had shown. His sympathetic reference to the absence of the Misses Bruce through illness voiced the feeling of the whole audience, and a message of sympathy was sent to these devoted supporters of the work. After Mr. Rossington's address, a short varied programme of vocal and instrumental music, recitations, a "sketch" by two young lady friends, and a "stump speech" brought a very successful meeting to a close. Following the above, on Thursday evening, December 30th, the young people connected with the Sunday-school had their Christmas Party. Again, nearly one hundred and fifty sat down to tea, and afterwards gathered in the church for a short concert and the usual distribution of prizes for the year. On this occasion the chair was taken by Rev. J. Worthington, B.A., of Mountpottinger Church. The programme was very similar to the evening before, except that on this occasion we were favoured by a duet and songs by the Misses and Mr. Duffield, who, in common with all who took part in the programme, greatly pleased the young people. A welcome surprise came in the presence of Miss J. Bruce, who kindly distributed the prizes at the close of the meeting.

Cairncastle.—A Concert in connection with the Old Meeting-house was held on Thursday evening, 23rd December, in the Lecture Hall. The programme, arranged by Miss Mollie Austin, of Larne, included vocal solos, by that lady and by Miss Jane Jellie, of Carrickfergus, also by Miss M. Rogan and Messrs. Dummer and J. Burton, and by Mr. F. Garvey as comedian in costume; violin solos by Mr. J. Lappin, conductor of the Larne String Band, which was in attendance and rendered three selections; recitations by Miss Apsley, and readings by Mr. Sam Magill. The hall was well filled by a thoroughly appreciative audience. During an interval in the programme, the Rev. Eustace Thompson distributed a few prizes to scholars of the Old Meeting-house National School, and said in conclusion that with a view to having a small sum of money for the same purpose next year he would open a subscription list to which he hoped that every stipend payer in his own congregation would contribute. After the concert, tea was generously provided for a great many who had come from afar, by Mrs. Campbell Tweed and Miss Hunter and Miss Perrie. A large proportion of the audience adjourned to the National School where they danced till nearly two o'clock next morning.

Glenarm.—A successful Concert was held in the Non-Subscribing Church on Wednesday evening, 29th December. The Rev. J. A. Miskimmin presided over a large and appreciative audience and introduced a varied programme, consisting of choruses by the choir, two part songs by six members of the choir, *viz.*, the Misses E. Morrow, A. Morrow, Mary Dinsmore, Mina Dinsmore, J. M'Kay and L. Galbraith. Solos were well rendered by the Misses M. Barnes, Miskimmin, Macauley, M'Neill, M. Pullen, M'Kay, Mary and Mina Dinsmore, and Mr. John Robinson. Mr. Jas. M'Neill contributed a recitation, and Messrs. Jas. M'Neill and Wm. M'Cullough displayed marked ability in the amusing dialogue "Done Completely Brown." Humorous readings, "Paddy M'Quillan's Tea Party" and "Kate Dalrymple's Legacy" were given by Messrs. Jas. Galbraith and D. Mitchell. The pleasure of the evening was much enhanced by selections on the gramophone, kindly lent by Mr. Smith. The accompaniments were efficiently played by the Misses Miskimmin, Pullen, Barnes, M'Mullan and Donaldson. Votes of thanks proposed by the Chairman to all who had assisted in the evening's entertainment brought the proceedings to a close.

Holywood.—On Tuesday evening, January 11th, the monthly meeting of the Total Abstinence Society was held. There was a good attendance, including

the Rev. W. J. Archer, of High Street Presbyterian Church, who gave an interesting and instructive address on Temperance work. The chair was occupied by the Rev. G. Leonard Phelps, and the following kindly contributed to the programme—Miss Praeger (recitations), Miss Clara P. Patterson (songs), Miss Mabel Henderson and Miss F. Munce (pianoforte duet), Mr. Coleman (songs) and Mr. Hugh Hunter (recitations).

On Thursday evening, January 20th, the Annual Sunday School Soiree was held. Tea was served at 6-30, when there was a large attendance of children, and later on many parents and others of the congregation joined the party. A clever dumb charade in five acts was given by the Misses May, Elsie and Norah Patterson and Master Colville Patterson, and this was followed by several action and other songs by a number of children who had been taught by Miss Patterson. Miss Mabel and Miss Kathleen Harvey gave a Japanese umbrella song and Mr. A. Hunter kindly contributed two mandoline solos. At the conclusion of the musical programme, Father Christmas appeared and distributed presents and sweets from a well-laden Christmas-tree, and when everyone had received a gift there was a distribution of oranges, and the proceedings terminated by singing "God Save the King."

Moneyrea.—On Christmas Eve, the Annual Christmas Party for the children attending Moneyrea Sunday-school was held in the Schoolroom, which was tastefully decorated for the occasion and judging by the attendance has lost none of its popularity, the room being crowded. In the unavoidable absence of Mr. A. K. Stewart, J.P., the chair was taken by Mr. John Davies, H.M.C., Manchester, on the motion of Mr. S. M'K. Turkington, seconded by Mr. Hugh Frame. The proceedings commenced shortly after six o'clock, when tea was dispensed by the ladies and gentlemen of the Sunday-school Committee, which lasted till about eight o'clock, when a most enjoyable miscellaneous entertainment, consisting of songs, duets, action songs, recitations, bar-bell and drill exercises, etc., was rendered by the scholars, under the direction of Mr. Thomas J. Millen, the accompaniments being cleverly rendered by Miss Agnes Bell (Principal and Assistant Teachers respectively in Moneyrea N.S.) The musical items being finished, a hearty vote of thanks was proposed and enthusiastically accorded to Mr. Millen and Miss Bell. A large number of book prizes were then awarded for good attendance, after which the Rev. H. Magowan, at the request of the Chairman, gave an appropriate short address, which with a few well-chosen words from the Chairman brought the children's part of the proceedings to a close. The company were next provided with duplicate numbers corresponding to the numbers on the toys on a large well-laden Christmas tree, which was now robbed of its treasures, and which was the source of great amusement to juniors and seniors alike. By unanimous consent, a dance was next started, and to the strains of a couple of violins played by Messrs. Robert M'Millan and Hugh Frame, dancing was vigorously kept up till after midnight, when the company dispersed, each wishing the other a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Mountpottinger.—The Annual New Year's Gathering was held in the Schoolroom on Friday, January 7th, when, as is usual on such occasions, there was a large attendance. After ample justice had been done to the good things provided, the scholars delighted the audience by their rendering of action songs and playlets, in all of which they attained a degree of perfection which was very gratifying to those upon whom the work of training them had devolved. Following this the prizes for attendance during the past year were handed to the various recipients by Miss Maria Davidson, one of the oldest members of the church. In the course of a pleasing little address, Miss Davidson expressed the great satisfaction felt at being asked to perform this little duty, and pointed

out to the young people that they should feel sensible of the privileges afforded to them by being associated with the Sunday-school. The concluding portion of the programme was the customary distribution of gifts from the Christmas Tree undertaken by a gigantic Santa Claus.

Newry.—A Young People's Guild has been inaugurated in connection with the First Presbyterian (Unitarian) Church, and already two very successful meetings have been held. The first meeting, held in December, took the form of a social evening. Tea was provided, and a programme of music and recitations was rendered by the following—Miss S. Warnock, Miss L. M'Combe, Miss Thompson, Miss Lockhart, Mrs. Slipper, Mrs. Rowland, Miss Chareen Pinkerton and Miss E. Slipper; Mr. J. Rowland, Mr. M. Simpson and Master Desmond Pinkerton. During an interval, the Chairman explained the aims and objects of the Guild, and 51 members were enrolled. The Rev. Geo. J. Slipper was elected as President, Miss L. M'Combe as Hon. Treasurer, and Mr. Malcolm Simpson as Hon. Secretary. The second meeting was held on Tuesday evening, January 10th, and in spite of the very wintry weather, an audience of 60 were present. The entertainment consisted of a Lantern Lecture on "A Dash for the North Pole," both lecture and slides being lent by the S. H. Benson Lantern Lecture Bureau, London. The lantern was lent by Mr. Holden, Principal of the Newry Technical School, and was manipulated by Mr. M. Simpson. Votes of thanks to the Principal of the Technical School, and to the lanternist, were heartily accorded.

Rademon.—The Annual Social Meeting of the Total Abstinence Society was held on Friday evening, January 7th, and was most successful. The School-room was packed. Tea was served with its usual accompaniments at seven o'clock. When the physical wants of all present were satisfied, the Chairman invited attention to the object of the meeting in a few introductory remarks. For the first time since his settlement in Ireland, the Rev. S. E. Bowen, of Crumlin, visited the Society and delivered a helpful address on Temperance. He also sang in a very pleasing manner several songs and gave a recitation. Mr. Bowen received a hearty welcome, and was warmly thanked for his visit. A dialogue, "The Amateur Phrenologist," was tastefully rendered by seven of the young people. Miss Morrison contributed songs, and many recitations and some songs were given by the children, a supply of apples and oranges was demolished with rapidity, and the meeting was closed at twelve o'clock, the audience joining in singing "God Save the King."

Unity Guild.—The Annual Soiree was held in the Central Hall on Wednesday, January 12th, when, despite the inclement weather, the function proved a most enjoyable one, at least 60 being present. The sub-committee responsible for the details of the undertaking adopt this medium of conveying their very grateful thanks to those ladies who by their gifts towards or work in connection with the refreshment room helped to make this particular side of the function an unqualified success. The February meeting is fixed for the 16th of the month in York Street Hall, when Mr. J. H. Gilliland will open a discussion on the unemployed question. In view of the opener's undoubted qualifications to deal with the subject in a masterful fashion it is hoped that there will be a large attendance.

UNITARIAN CHURCH, COLNE, LANCS.

Minister:—REV. H. WARNOCK (3, Hill St.)

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